

PATHS OF THE LORD.



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The paths of the Lord

THE
PATHS OF THE LORD.

BY
REV. WILLIAM REID,
EDINBURGH,
AUTHOR OF "THE BLOOD OF JESUS," ETC.

"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not ; I will lead them in paths that they have not known : I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."—ISAIAH XLII. 16.



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P R E F A C E.

WHEN two equal forces are directed at right angles upon a given movable object, that object will move in the direction of neither force, but in a direction intermediate to both. So is it with us when acted upon by the carnal heart and the gospel of the grace of God. That gospel may be clearly preached or written; but it generally happens that, on account of our natural blindness and opposition, it has to take another than the direct course in reaching our hearts and in saving our souls. We propose to show the way by which sinners, on account of their ignorance, have to be brought to know the truth of the gospel as a personal experience; and, by the Spirit and providence of God, to enjoy its sanctifying and saving power.

The *sin-crisis*, as described in this work, must be experienced either before or after conversion; and it is an experience which will make us "walk softly" whenever it comes. I believe that all who are saved are more or less convinced of sin previous to conver-

sion, for Jesus says, "I came not to call *the righteous* but *sinner*s to *repentance*;" but in the case of some, it may be so blended with the experience of the love of God in Christ, that it is not strong, or very distinctly recognized. It is, however, the *conscious sinner* that Jesus *saves*; or else, if there be no consciousness of sin and danger, salvation is an unmeaning term, and conversion is a piece of unintelligible mysticism.

In the case of those who have had no religious education, and who, at the same time have run greedily in the ways of the world, conviction of sin is generally overwhelming,—the sin-crisis comes before conversion; while in the case of those who have had a thorough religious training, conviction may be very feeble and gradual before conversion, and the sin-crisis may take place months and even years subsequent to conversion, and generally on the back of some declension from the "first love" and zealous service of conversion times. But let no perishing sinner hanker after the mere *accidents* of conversion and salvation. On the contrary, be in earnest to have Christ in you the hope of glory, and leave the *manner* of his entrance entirely to himself.

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THE PATHS OF THE LORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE PATH OF PEACE.

THE Apostle Peter writes, that there are “given unto us exceeding great and precious promises;” and that blessed passage in Isaiah forty-second and sixteenth contains some that are “exceeding great and precious.” Only listen to your Shepherd’s voice, and you must wonder at the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth: *“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked*

things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." How exceeding great and precious to our souls are such promises as these! How cheering in this wilderness to hear "the voice of my Beloved," saying, "Lo, I am with you alway!" Our gracious Redeemer is ever near. The good Shepherd goeth before his sheep, and leadeth them forth by "the right way," though it may be "by a way that they knew not."

My Christian friends, let me recall to your remembrance that he brought you by a way you knew not, when he made you "his people, and the sheep of his pasture." In your spiritual ignorance, you wished to be brought to Jesus by a way of your own, and you had the whole way pictured out; and it seemed quite amazing to you that the Lord should set your way entirely at naught. You thought that your way of being brought to Jesus and to enjoy peace was the right way;

and yet God had no pleasure in it. You professed to renounce the deeds of the law, and to put on the righteousness of Christ,—to acknowledge the necessity of regenerating grace, and to live by faith on the Son of God. But, though your profession was right, your practice was wrong; for, on account of the blindness of your heart, you missed the narrow way,—“the new and living way,”—and walked in the way of anxiety rather than in the way of divine peace. Some of you struggled hard to make for yourselves a religious way into the presence of the holy Jehovah. You would fain have formed a pavement of glistening goodness by which to come near the great and mighty God. In order to do this you would be correct in your conduct; you would be devout and “instant in prayer;” you would strive to have good hearts and holy thoughts; you would make vows and resolutions; you would peruse the Scriptures with great dil-

igence, and be constant and earnest in your attendance on all the duties and ordinances of religion. How many poor souls are continually building at this tower of Babel, whose top, they imagine, will reach to heaven! And yet, when the Lord comes down to bring them to himself, the first thing he does is to confound them, and stop the building of the tower! He first confounds all such Babel-builders, whom he means to teach a more excellent way. When you were arrested by the Lord, was it not very difficult to stand still and see your religion all leveled by the divine Spirit, who alone can bring blind sinners into the King's highway? You confessed yourselves lost; but, that you might be made thoroughly to feel it, the good Spirit was commissioned to acquaint you with your true condition. Your sins were set in order before you,—you were made to feel that they formed mountain barriers between you and your God.

Your conscience felt burdened, and all hope of salvation was cut off. The sorrows of death compassed you; and the waves of wrath appeared ready to overwhelm your soul. Ah, how mysterious and strange was all this! Yet this is God's way, that he may lay sinners in the dust. He leads to such views of sin as to show them that it deserves infinite punishment; and in their mental anguish they are brought to descend, as it were, into the very depths of the "horrible pit," and to lie there crying, individually, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" And when by the mercy of God they are saved, they can sing with intelligence that awful, joyful song, "I will glorify thy name for evermore; for great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell."

The Holy Ghost, although called the Comforter, gives no comfort to carnal hearts. On the contrary, he leads the lost one to

Sinai, and makes him hear the thunders of Jehovah, and gaze upon the flashing lightnings of his vengeance, and listen to the awful curses of his broken law. He can give you no comfort in your sins ; and it is more than likely that he will so convince you of sin that your conscience will be lashed into a fearful storm, and the fierce tempest of the Almighty will appear to sweep over your soul. And when you stand “trembling and astonished,” and know not which way to turn, he will take you by your right hand, and lead you to the cross of Calvary ; and while he reminds you, even there, that “our God is a consuming fire,” he will bid you “behold the Lamb ;” and, as you look, you will hear a voice from that crucified One, speaking peace, and saying, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” “I am the way ; no man cometh to the Father

but by me ;” and “ Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.” This is the new and living way, — the only way of salvation, yet a way we knew not, and never should have known had we been left to ourselves.

And, before going further, let me solemnly ask you, my dear reader, what is your experience of this way? Have you been brought to God by his own way, of conviction of sin and application of the blood of Jesus? Happy are you if the Lord is your Shepherd! Oh, what a blessing it is to be made to cease from man and from self, and to lie passive in the wilderness before the good Shepherd, and allow him to bring us to himself in his own blessed way, of conviction, pardon, and peace! Oh, how desirable it is to be washed in the blood of atonement, and clothed in the spotless righteousness of Immanuel! This is God’s method, — God’s holy way of saving sinners; and truly it is a way we knew not, — a way

we never should have known, had not he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But Jesus is given to be a leader to his people to the end of time, — yea, even throughout eternity, — for it is written, “ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat : for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and *shall lead them* to living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

When the Lord brings lost sinners to himself in his own gracious way, it is that they may remain with him as the sheep of his pasture, and follow him wheresoever he may lead them. Conversion is the beginning of grace, — not the end. Conversion is the gate of the narrow way ; and even

after we are converted, we have the whole way to glory before us ; and being ignorant of it and under the necessity of traveling in it, we must be daily following the Captain of our salvation, who says, in his great love, "*I will lead them in paths that they have not known.*" The Lord's ways are very different from our ways. When he called us by his grace, he himself knew what he would do ; but we knew it not. And seeing that we are "blind" as to the way in which we are yet to walk, may we not expect to be led in many "paths" of which we have never thought ? But although his ways are not our ways, yet his ways are always best. The experience we shall receive in these ways of his will prove salutary to us, and (by his grace) glorifying to him.

When Israel came out of Egypt, they were taking what would certainly have been the shortest, and, to the eye of man the safest, way to go to Canaan ; but it was not

God's way, and therefore they had to give it up. They were taking that course by which they would have altogether escaped the Red Sea ; but " the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel *that they turn.*" They were on their way northward, to pass by the sea ; but the Lord commanded them to move southwards, and encamp between the sea and their enemies ! This might have appeared to many among them a strange and dangerous procedure ; but " the foolishness of God is wiser than men." For though they were shut in by impassable rocks on either hand, faced by the rolling waves, and closely pursued by an armed host, they were quite safe ; for they had gone into that difficult and trying position at the command of God, and he was in the midst of them, to open up for them a way of escape ; and he led them in those very paths which more fully showed them his grace and power, — accomplished the

complete overthrow of their enemies, “and manifested forth his glory.” “This cometh from the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” And surely, my dear friends, when we are at any time in perplexity and know not what to do, this may teach us to be still, and know that he is God. The sorrowing disciples of our Lord would not have felt his visit, on the evening of that day on which he rose from the grave, to be so refreshing, had it not been for the circumstances in which they were then placed. Their hearts were not only sorrowful, but they were fearful lest they should be arrested and murdered as their Lord had been. The narrative is full of instruction. It runs thus: “Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." They feared the Jews; but instead of a visit of infuriated Jews, they had a visit of the risen Jesus, speaking in words of love, and saying, "Peace be unto you," and showing unto them "his hands and his side," to assure them, at once, that he indeed was their crucified Lord, and that he had "made peace by the blood of his cross." "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." If you will follow the Lord fully, he will doubtless lead you into circumstances of trial and perplexity, where, like Paul in Adria, you will be "driven up and down," and for many days you may neither see sun nor stars, "and have no small tempest," in order to try your faith, and show you his salvation.

When brought to Jesus, the Lord's dealings with us ever after are such as to make

us cease from our own ways, and allow ourselves to be led in his. His paths frequently cross our paths,—in fact, his paths run quite contrary to our natural hearts; and that is the reason why there is so much difficulty felt in submitting to the will of God. But what can *we* sinful creatures know of “the way of holiness?” Nothing at all, unless taught by God himself. How frequently does it happen that the inward experience we have from God is not the experience we thought we should have! Some of you thought you should have nothing but peace and joy, sunshine and calm, and summer all the year round, when you believed in Jesus and connected yourselves with the people of God. But, oh, how different has it been! how checkered has been your experience! You will find out, by and by, if you have not found it out already, that your souls can enjoy peace only by a full surrender of yourselves to Jesus, to be led as poor blind chil-

dren through this great wilderness, “where there is no way.” Like Israel of old, you must submit to be led by Israel’s God. “He led them forth by *the right way*, that they may go to a city of habitation. He saved them for his name’s sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.”

Thy way, not mine, O Lord, however dark it be !
Lead me by thine own hand, choose out the path for
me.

Smooth let it be or rough, it will be still the best ;
Winding or straight, it matters not, it leads me to thy
rest.

I dare not choose my lot : I would not, if I might ;
Choose thou for me, my God, so shall I walk aright.
The kingdom that I seek is thine ; so let the way
That leads to it be thine, else I must surely stray.





CHAPTER II.

THE PATH OF PURITY.

THE Lord frequently leads his people in paths that they have not known, *to make them holy.* “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” The Lord led Israel in paths that they had not known, when he led them about “for the space of forty years in the wilderness.” He might have taken them into Canaan in a few days, but they were not ready to enter upon their inheritance. Theirs had been, in Egypt, the life of slaves, and they were not fit to meet the enemy in battle, nor to be put in possession of the land, and to have it as their own. There must be a wilderness education, to

teach them their entire dependence upon Jehovah, and to discover the dreadful corruption which lay concealed in their hearts. When he was preparing them for immediate entrance into the land of promise, he said, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, *to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee.*"

How much corruption does a season of leading through the wilderness bring forth to view! It is not by the joys of first love that we know whether we will walk before God to the praise of the glory of his grace, but by a few years of "the wilderness." The "wilderness" reveals the wickedness, the rebelliousness, the perverseness, the discontentedness, the godlessness, and deceitfulness of the human heart. It is *there* that the Lord "humbles us and proves us," and

brings out what is in our hearts. When your soul was breathing after holiness and likeness to Jesus, you may have prayed earnestly that the Lord would show you the hatefulness of sin and the vileness of self, and you may have been waiting to see whether something like a revelation from heaven would not be made to you ; and you may have felt, in some measure, disappointed that you had not obtained such deep views of sin as you longed to have, that you might with more intensity abhor yourself, and depart from iniquity. A period of wilderness-experience was given you, and you were brought into circumstances which were most trying and provoking to the carnal heart. The Lord removed his hand, to some extent, from restraining your corruptions, and then you had the answer to your prayer by “terrible things.” You began to see that that awful catalogue of sins mentioned by the Saviour might have been, in a great meas-

ure, filled up out of the hateful contents of your heart, for out of your heart were proceeding "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." You thought that your heart was comparatively good before this experience was given you, and you may have deplored the evil-heartedness of others; but now you see that within your own heart there were lying asleep a swarm of loathsome reptiles, which needed only to be roused to make them trail their slimy coils over your conduct, and sting yourself and all around you. There was within you a stagnant pool, which needed only to be stirred by some trouble, offense, or temptation, to give such evidence of its putridity as to disgust yourself and all who came within your reach. My dear friend, if the Lord has thus allowed your corruptions to come out and disfigure your fair profession, and,

upon mature reflection, to make you loathe yourself, then give him thanks, though the experience came not in your way, but in a way you little thought of; and though it was hard to bear, and has made you say and do things of which you are now ashamed, and for which you may have to mourn all your days, if it has made your soul “like a weaned child,” that is most blessed, for that is “the end of the Lord.”

The experience of that accurate spiritual anatomist, President Edwards, is peculiarly instructive:—“When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell; and it appears to me that were it not for free grace exalted to the infinite height of all the fullness of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power stretched forth in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should sink down in it beyond the sight of every thing but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even

to such a depth. And yet it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceedingly small and faint, and amazing to see that I have no more sense of it. I have greatly longed, of late, for a broken heart, and can not bear the thought of being no more humble than other Christians. I consider that their humility would be vile self-exaltation in me. Others speak of longing to be 'humbled in the dust;' but I always think that I ought 'to lie infinitely low before God,' and such is often my expression in prayer. And it is affecting to reflect how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depth of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, in my heart." Lord, what is man? A mass of corruption!

Ah! you thought, when the sun shone brightly, and the fragrance of summer was wafted around your path, that your old sins were completely eradicated, or at least so far subdued that they would never again

vex, distract, and pollute you ; but you have been taught a very different lesson. You neglected prayer, or reading, or meditation, or watchfulness, and your old sins began immediately to show their hateful and loathsome forms. And to intensify the trial, “the old serpent,” at such times, attacks the sin-deluged soul with his fiery temptations, and with remorseless malignity endeavors to hurry the hardened one into open sin, and heaviness is experienced “through manifold temptations.” And added to this, we may by our sins have separated between us and our God, so that he may have hid his face from us, and have “withdrawn himself.” How dreadful is such a case ! We are ready in such circumstances to exclaim, “All these things are against us ;” but they are not so in reality, for they are among the “all things” that work together for our good ; and “the good Shepherd” is thus fulfilling in our experience his own gracious

promise, "*I will lead them in paths that they have not known.*"

I walk as one who knows that he is treading
A stranger soil ;
As one round whom a serpent-world is spreading
Its subtle coil.

I walk as one but yesterday delivered
From a sharp chain ;
Who trembles lest the bond so newly severed
Be bound again.

I walk as one who feels that he is breathing
Ungential air ;
For whom, as wiles, the tempter still is wreathing
The bright and fair.

My steps, I know, are on the plains of danger,
For sin is near ;
But looking up, I pass along, a stranger,
In haste and fear.





CHAPTER III.

THE PATH OF STRENGTH.

THE Lord also leads his people in paths they have not known, in order to *confirm them in the faith*, and make them steadfast in his covenant.

“The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” Thus prayed the Apostle Peter. He well knew how it is that the Lord confirms his people. He was himself led in paths he had not known. He was full of fire and fervor, burning with love to Jesus, and, decided in his adherence to his gracious Lord; he would go with him to prison and

to death! — he would never deny him! — he would never forsake him; though all should forsake him, yet would he abide faithful; he would stand by his Redeemer, should he have to stand alone! — and we all know what he did. How unlike his profession were his deeds! He never thought that he needed to be taught his own weakness in such an unlooked-for way. He was truly led in paths that he had not known, to drive out of him his self-confidence, and teach him where his real strength lay, — to make him “strong in the Lord and the power of his might.” Jesus said to him, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;” and his writings — his two Epistles — have been eminently useful for accomplishing this great and desirable end. And Peter’s experience is that of thousands. It may be yours, beloved reader. You may have been led in paths you never expected to be led in, to deliver you from self-com-

placency, self-sufficiency, self-exaltation, and self-confidence. You may have prayed for steadfastness and consistency, and all the time you may have never felt your need of God's special interference on your behalf; but the Lord, in some unexpected way, has answered your prayer, by showing you first your own utter weakness and helplessness.

The wintry storms that beat upon the forest make the trees thereof take a firmer hold of the soil; so the Lord, by permitting the storms of trouble and temptation to beat upon the soul, makes his people strike their roots deeper and deeper into clefts of "the Rock of Ages," and to become more grounded and settled in the faith of the gospel. The Lord frequently confirms his people's faith by permitting them to witness the falls of others, or by experience of their own uneven and wayward walk. A holy minister of Jesus Christ has said: "The falls of professors into sin make me tremble. I have

been driven away from prayer, and burdened in a fearful manner, by hearing or seeing their sin. This is wrong. It is right to tremble, and to make every sin of every professor a lesson of my own helplessness ; but it should lead me more to Christ." I must say that I have been frequently made to tremble for myself when I heard or read of the fall of some who had occupied a prominent position in the church of Christ ; and it has made me cling to Jesus with more earnestness and simplicity of faith. I have no doubt you have been also made to tremble for yourself, when you saw those who had long professed to be followers of the Lamb turning back or falling into sin. It takes very much to make us know that we are "without strength," and to cleave to God as our strength.

Conjoined with the inward teaching of his Spirit, we need the outward teaching of his providence. Our gracious God deals

with us in love in all he does for us, and in all he permits to happen to us. Many think they are established in the faith, when they are not rooted and built up in Christ; and they must be taught by bitter experience that they are deceiving themselves, and walking in the light of their own fire, and delusively trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others. If nothing else will bring them to a sense of their true condition, God will let Satan loose upon them; then will their hearts be lashed into a dark tempest, and their iniquities, like the wind, will carry them away to the regions of doubt and darkness, fear and despondency, if not into open rebellion, and, perhaps, even back for a season to the dreary world, to which they thought they had bidden an eternal farewell. Some professors are permitted for a time to follow the ways of their own hearts, and others are allowed to embrace dangerous errors and

soul-distracting views of divine things, that they may eventually embrace the truth as it is in Jesus more cordially, and walk in the truth more consistently. Satan is sometimes permitted to fill the mind with dreadful and tormenting doubts with regard to the whole scheme of salvation, and the very foundations seem as if they would be destroyed. Atheism, infidelity, perplexing thoughts about God and Christ and the great salvation fill the soul; and those who are thus exercised do indeed find trouble and sorrow. Those only who have been led by paths that they have not known, through the mire and marshes of skepticism, to build on the "sure foundation," can sympathize with the desolateness and self-crushing which result from such leadings. But the end of all this is our confirmation. And when we have such experience, it tends to drive us out of ourselves and make us build more firmly on the unchanging and everlasting

foundation, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

Not a few of the most eminent Christians, as well as able divines, have been allowed to get bemazed in perplexity and doubt about one or other of the precious doctrines of Jehovah’s Word; and they have been led to examine the Scriptures more thoroughly on that very account; and the result has been their entire conviction of the truthfulness of all the utterances of the God of truth; and some of them have been so fully impressed with the truth of the great things of God’s law, that they have written for the confirmation of the faith of others. One who was once tossed upon the billows of tormenting doubt with regard to the sonship and divinity of our blessed Lord, thus writes:—“He consciously stood upon a gulf, the depths of which were enveloped in the shadow of death. Arianism had been his next resting-place; and *that* he had suf-

ficient self-distrust to regard as a break merely in the fall to deeper and more deadly error. He at length turned to the point from which he ought to have set out, and with a firm resolution to rest satisfied with nothing short of a complete investigation, he examined and classified every passage of Scripture which seemed to pertain to the subject. Thus was the present work originated ; * and it eventually proved perfectly adequate to his own conviction. Nothing short of the discomfort and perplexity here described would have induced him to offer his aid to the researches of others." Thus did the Lord lead this servant of his in paths that he had not known — painful, perplexing paths — to a well-grounded belief of one of the cardinal doctrines of revelation, and to the production of an unparalleled work on the divine sonship of Jesus, for the confirmation of his church ! How truly may

* Treffrey on the *Eternal Sonship*.

the Lord say to us, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts!"

But it is not likely that many have been troubled in such a way as was the minister just referred to, or led by the paths of doubt regarding the doctrines of grace; but you may have been led by paths that you found perplexing and painful, to bring you to a settled "peace in believing." Though you may not have doubted God's sincerity, you may have frequently doubted your own. Though you believed that all he has said in his Word of Jesus and of his own love and grace was true, yet you may have had many sad questionings whether it was true to you. There are some who have this experience for years; and they are sorely tried and tempted. Sometimes they have hope, at

other times fear. Sometimes they think they observe the streaks of the dawn of day, but at other times they are enveloped in the darkness of midnight. One who was long in this unhappy state once said to me, "I find now that though it was a painful way by which the Lord led me to Jesus, it was the best way; and my experience is, that a great fight is the precursor of a great victory." That Christian is now a simple believer in Jesus, and has no doubt of being "accepted in the Beloved." But the way to that confirmed faith and settled peace lay through the region of difficulties, fightings, questionings, and fears. If you are thus led by God (and I do not say that you *must* be thus led,—some may be, others may not), rest not satisfied till you see the end of the Lord; for he is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy." "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. The Lord raiseth them that are

bowed down.” It is well to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. And the Lord sometimes leads us to engage in this exercise by unlooked-for means. Our strong, clear views of Jesus as a Saviour become beclouded by sin ; our joy, peace, hope, love, and zeal lose much of their intensity ; and we begin to fear lest we may have been deceiving ourselves. You may be sometimes writing bitter things against yourself, and saying, “ Ah ! surely I am not a child of God at all ; for where is my zeal for his glory ? where my holiness, my love to Jesus, my faith, my works, and labors of love ? Were I his, surely I would hate and shun sin far more than I do ; I would live more believingly, walk more tenderly, pray more fervently, work more devotedly, and speak more guardedly ; I would not have these dark clouds coming over me, these unbelieving thoughts rising up within me, these cold damps overspreading my soul, and

these dreadful corruptions weltering within me." Ah! dear soul, be encouraged; the Lord may be leading you, in all your blindness, in paths that you have not known. The unconverted do not know aught of those struggles through which you have passed, or may be even now passing. They know nothing of "the new man" laboring for the ascendancy. The Lord may be graciously leading you to a confirmed faith and a more devoted service. But oh, take care that you do not rest in this experience, but press on toward the mark! Christian experience is mere shifting sand. Christ is "THE ROCK."

Dear reader, if you have been led in paths of *confirmation* which you have not known, then give God all the praise, and say to him, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the

horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

Pray also that God's Spirit may give you a fuller discovery of your own unspeakable sinfulness and vileness in his holy eyes, and so lead you that you will be made much holier than you now are, and more thoroughly rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith. May he even now descend upon you, "to the end he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

Jesus, while this rough desert-soil
I tread, be thou my guide and stay;
Nerve me for conflict and for toil;
Uphold me on my stranger-way.

Jesus, in heaviness and fear,
'Mid cloud, and gloom, and shade I stray,
For earth's last night is drawing near;
Oh cheer me in my stranger way.

Jesus, in solitude and grief,
When sun and stars withhold their ray,
Make haste, make haste to my relief;
Oh, light me on my stranger-way.

Jesus, in weakness of this flesh,
When Satan grasps me for his prey;
Oh, give me victory afresh,
And speed me on my stranger-way.

Jesus, my righteousness and strength,
My more than life, my more than day;
Bring, bring deliverance at length, —
Oh, come and end my stranger-way.





IV.

THE PATH OF COMFORT.

AS the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ; for whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." The Church may expect much trouble and sorrow here; but if tribulation abound, consolation will also abound. The words of Jesus are very explicit: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of

good cheer, I have overcome the world.” “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” The comfort is sure; but we must be willing to go to the wilderness for it. The Lord says of his spouse, “I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her;” or, as it is in the margin, “I will speak *to her heart*.” It is said in Lamentations, “Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not afflict *from his heart*.” But though the affliction comes not from his heart, yet the consolation does, and it goes to the heart; for he says, “I will speak *to her heart*.” Jesus, the consolation of Israel, came to our world in the fullness of time, and during all the period of his terrestrial sojourn he was “the Man of Sorrows.” He knew such sorrow as none of us can know. He agonized in the garden of Gethsemane, and expired amid the anguish, darkness, and

soul-crushing sorrows of Calvary. But when enduring those sorrows, he was on his way to the eternal joys that are at God's right hand. And his experience as the Captain of our salvation must be expected by us if we are his followers.

We have a great fight of afflictions to endure before we enter the "joyous city." God sets a kingdom before us, and promises to give us that kingdom, with all its unspeakable immunities and "pleasures for evermore;" but "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." And if at any time, while on our way to that kingdom, we expect consolation without tribulation, we expect what is not in accordance with the experience of our Lord or his people, or the promises of his blessed Word. Where does the Word promise us comfort of which we have not a feeling of need? The very idea of consolation implies sorrow. And when we pray for much joy

and comfort at a time when every thing is going well with us, we are virtually praying for sorrow. The comfort gets into the soul only by those openings which are made by grief and sore affliction. Mary was weeping at the sepulcher when the gentle, familiar voice of Jesus pronounced her name, and sent a thrill of wondrous joy through her whole soul; and the disciples were together mourning and weeping over the sad event of his crucifixion, when he stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be unto you," and by his presence filled their hearts with "joy unspeakable." It was after the Jews had experienced much sorrow, and expected to be all massacred by the decree of wicked Haman, that they "had joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day," on the reversal of that decree. It was when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were walking in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, that a fourth One was seen with them, "like the

Son of God.” And if we are to have much consolation, we must lay our account with being cast into “the burning fiery furnace.” The heat of “the furnace of affliction” will be the measure of our consolation. If we are to be greatly comforted, we must be greatly afflicted. The Lord will lead us by “paths that we have not known,” into trying, difficult, heart-rending, soul-vexing circumstances, that we may be made to feel that all earthly sources of consolation are broken cisterns, and that all real consolation must be found in him. All true and lasting consolation must flow from himself. And when the soul is first brought to have “joy unspeakable,” it is after being brought very low by the convincing Spirit. The Spirit turns us to Jesus to produce both wounding and healing. The very fact of a Comforter being promised, implies that there will be need of his comfort in the church of God. A comforter sent supposes “an afflicted peo-

ple" to be comforted. Let us not, then, mistake our afflictions for calamities, for they are not so; they are the vessels by which the Lord pours "the oil of joy" into the spirits of his dear afflicted children. When you see no possibility of deliverance from your difficulties and afflictions, then the Lord will draw near, saying, "*I know their sorrows, and am come down to deliver them; comfort ye, comfort ye my people.*" "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." When you know not what to do, nor how to hold out any longer under the pressure of a complication of trials, sorrows, griefs, anxieties, and afflictions, he will interpose and grant you real and suitable consolation.

When speaking of the Lord's dealings with his own people in leading them by a way they had not known, another has given utterance to the following descriptive and expressive language:—

"They were living to themselves; self,

with its hopes, and promises, and dreams, had still hold of them ; but he began to fulfill their prayers. They had asked for contrition, and he sent them sorrow ; they had asked for purity, and he sent them thrilling anguish ; they had asked to be meek, and he had broken their hearts ; they had asked to be dead to the world, and he slew all their living hopes ; they asked to be made like unto him, and he placed them in the furnace, sitting by ‘as a refiner of silver,’ till they should reflect his image ; they had asked to lay hold of his cross, and when he reached it to them it lacerated their hands ; — they had asked they knew not what, nor how ; but he had taken them at their word, and granted them all their petitions. They were hardly willing to follow on so far, or to draw so nigh to him. They had upon them an awe and fear, as Jacob at Bethel, or Eliphaz in the night-vision, or as the apostles when they thought they had seen a spirit,

and knew not that it was Jesus ; — they could almost pray him to depart from them, or to hide his awfulness. They found it easier to obey than to suffer, to do than to give up, to bear the cross than to hang upon it ; but they can not go back, for they have come too near the unseen cross, and its virtues have pierced too deeply within them. He is fulfilling to them his promise, ‘ And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’ Now *their* turn is come at last, and that is all. Before, they had only *heard* of the mystery, but now they *feel* it. He has fastened on them his look of love, as he did on Mary and Peter, and they can not choose but follow. Little by little, from time to time, by flitting gleams, the mystery of his cross shines out upon them. They behold him as lifted up, and the glory which rays forth from the wounds of his holy passion ; and as they gaze upon it, they advance, and are changed into his likeness, and his name

shines out through them, for he dwells in them. They live alone with him above in unspeakable fellowship, willing to lack what others own, and to be unlike all, so that they are only like him. Such are they in all ages who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Had they chosen for themselves, or had their friends chosen for them, they would have chosen otherwise. They would have been brighter here, but less glorious in his kingdom. They would have had Lot's portion, not Abraham's, if they had halted any where,—if he had taken off his hand and let them stray back. And what would they not have lost! What forfeits in the morning of the resurrection! But he stayed them up, even against themselves. Many a time their foot had well-nigh slipped; but he in mercy held them up. Now, even in this life, they know all he did was done well. It was good for them to stand alone with him on the mountain and in the cloud, and

that not their will but his was done on them."

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations and troubles ; therefore fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Do not be in anxious haste to extricate yourself from trouble, when you are led into it by following Jesus. Though the tempest rage, and the sea roar with the fullness thereof, be not afraid ; Jesus is in the ship, and it is in no danger of sinking. Your enjoyment of himself, the wonder-working Immanuel, will be all the greater that you have seen him speak the winds and waves to silence, and produce "a great calm." Do not be seeking after a short-hand method of consolation ; there is no way of procuring it but by waiting patiently for the Lord's interference. Give yourself wholly into the hands of God, for good or for evil, for health or sickness, for sorrow or joy, for affliction or consolation ; and you

will soon be able to say, with holy Paul, "We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us and hath given us *everlasting consolation* and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish you in every good word and work." Amen.

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The riches of the flour will scarce appear.
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much;
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they may get.

For, till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us our vain affections, —
Till those corruptions which do misbecome us
Are by thy sacred Spirit winnowed from us, —
Until from us the straw of worldly treasures, —
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures, —
Yea, till his flail upon us he doth lay,
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away,
And leave the soul uncovered, — nay, yet more,
Till God shall make our very spirit poor,
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire :
But then we *shall* ; and that is my desire.





V.

THE PATH OF SERVICE.

IF you would be Christ's *at all*, you must make up your mind to be Christ's *altogether*. He said, when on earth, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Neither father nor mother, wife nor children, brethren nor sisters, houses nor lands, must be allowed to come between you and entire devotedness to Jesus. He would have you to be wholly his, and to be unreservedly devoted to his service, — willing to be any thing, do any thing, and go any where for the advancement of his cause. He would have you be in that woman's con-

dition, of whom he said, "*She hath done what she could.*"

You desire this. You pray for it, and pant after it, and you think that you are quite willing to be thoroughly consecrated to Jesus; but you feel as if you could not attain to it. There may be hindrances to entire consecration lurking about you, of which you are unconscious; and the Lord has to bring you by an unlooked-for way, and lead you in paths you have not known, to make you aware of these hindrances, and to make you part with them, and serve him with your whole heart and life. Holiness, in one of its aspects, is just devoted service. But your mind may be too much occupied with self or the world, and all the time you may be unconscious of it; and if so, you will likely get self crushed by some very humbling circumstance, and have the world very much swept away from you, before you discover those secret sins which mar your

service. Or, you may have your mind unduly set on those that are dear to your heart, and they may have to be removed,—it may be to a sick-room, or to the silent grave.

Temporal losses, afflictions, difficulties, bereavements, crosses, disappointments, and many other apparently adverse providences, are but love-tokens of the great Shepherd of Israel, and unmistakable indications of his holy and gracious determination to make his people devote themselves unreservedly to his ennobling service, that in promoting his glory they may obtain the highest possible happiness.

The Lord also leads his people “in paths they have not known” with reference to the *kind of service* in which they are to be employed. The wild youth of Bedford is arrested, convinced, converted, and, without much human learning, becomes one of the greatest preachers of his time. As the poet

is born, not *made*, so is the preacher; and Bunyan appeared to be a real Heaven-sent preacher, for his ministry was one of power. But yet the Lord led him away into Bedford jail, where he lay "mouth stopped" for a dozen of years, that he might construct his immortal allegory, the "Pilgrim's Progress." Some have thus been led into the writer's seclusion by God, even when, to the eye of human wisdom, they should have been in the preacher's pulpit. There are many living examples of this peculiarity in the leadings of the Lord. Let us be willing to *preach* or *print*, as God may judge best. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

More than sixty years ago, two gay young men — one of them an officer in the British navy — were converted to Christ, and were led to Calvary, and formed into soldiers of the cross; and all Scotland now reveres the memory of the Haldanes, and speaks of them

as the pioneers of that blessed tide of evangelism which has been gradually rising in that "land of the mountain and the flood" for more than half a century.

Twenty years ago the name of William Burns was known throughout a great part of Scotland, in connection with the revival of religion and the awakening and conversion of souls. Five years later he could not preach at all. God appeared to shut his mouth, so that he had no power or liberty to preach the gospel in his native land ; and he was led to China, where the Lord has again graciously opened his lips, and enabled him to speak to the Chinese, in their own tongue, of "the wonderful works of God ;" and the same power of the Holy Spirit is accompanying his preaching in the "Celestial Empire," and the same effects are visible as when he first proclaimed "the unsearchable riches of Christ" in this country. The mouths of many who once were suc-

cessful in winning souls appear to be closed. Is it not time for such to consider the propriety of waiting upon the Lord for another sphere of labor? Why not follow "the leadings of the Lord?"

Robert M'Cheyne proposed to go out as a missionary to the heathen; but the Lord did not permit him, but led him to St. Peter's Church, Dundee, and through his instrumentality greatly revived his work in that large and populous town, and, by his preaching of Jesus, converted many souls. And by the beautiful "Memoirs and Remains," he is still speaking with spirit-moving power in the minister's study and at the believer's fireside. Reader, be satisfied with the Lord's arrangements with reference to your service, for they are always the best. Be any thing, do any thing, and go any where, as the Lord may teach and lead you.

Dr. Kitto was once a poor slater boy; but

by a fall from a roof he was led into the work-house, injured and deaf, and was led out to a literary life devoted to the elucidation and illustration of the Holy Scriptures. Reader, perhaps, in a spiritual sense, you need a fall, to make you mighty in the Scriptures, and useful in expounding them to others.

George Müller, of Kroppenstaedt, when converted to Christ, about thirty-five years ago, determined to qualify himself as a missionary to the Jews; but the Lord led him to Bristol, to become a blessing to Gentile orphans, and an example of "the life of faith" to the Christian church. Besides preaching the gospel and engaging in other labors, he now supports, in that city, an institution for the maintenance and education of about eight hundred orphans, without having a penny of his own, and without asking any one for money, — simply by prayer and faith; and the Lord, who has led him

into this service, has sustained him in it for about twenty-five years; and He is still his “hope and confidence.” He has received for his orphans, *as the result of prayer to God*, since the commencement of the work, about £150,000. Reader, shrink not from any service for the Lord, though it may appear *secular*. If done for Christ’s sake, every deed is *sacred*. According to the “holy George Herbert,” even “drudgery” becomes “divine” when undertaken from love to Jesus.

Mrs. Judson, in her narrative of the captivity of her husband, and her own efforts and sufferings on his account, has the following:—“A review of our trip to, and adventures in, Ava, often excites the inquiry, Why were we permitted to go? *What good has been effected?* Two years of precious time have been *lost* to the mission—*unless some future advantage may be gained*—in consequence of the severe

discipline to which we ourselves have been subject. But all that we can say is, *It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*” She appears to have seen no reason why they should have had to pass through such a painful ordeal ; but I believe that both she and Dr. Judson know it now ; and I think I know it too, — at least in one of its phases. It so happened that the writer’s wife’s uncle was unintentionally the originating cause of Dr. Judson’s imprisonment. This is mentioned in the narrative as follows : — “ A report was in circulation that Captain Laird, lately arrived, had brought Bengal papers which contained the intention of the English to take Rangoon, and it was kept a secret from his majesty. An inquiry was instituted. The three Englishmen, Gouger, Laird, and Rogers, were called and examined. It was found that they had seen the papers, and they were put in confinement. Next followed the examination of the Ameri-

can missionaries, and, though they were not immediately arrested, they were so in a short time thereafter, on the suspicion that they were in the pay of the English, and probably spies. The English and the Americans were, consequently, thrust into the same fearful prison at Ava; and, subsequently, tied two and two, they were driven on together, over the burning sands, to the prison of Oung-pen-la, at a distance of some miles. Mr. Judson was then laboring under fever, and could ill bear such a fiery ordeal. The temperature was above one hundred degrees. The sand and gravel were like burning coals to the feet of the prisoners, which soon became perfectly destitute of skin, and in this wretched state they were goaded on by their unfeeling drivers. Mr. Judson's debilitated state, in consequence of fever, and having taken no food that morning, rendered him less capable of bearing such hardships than the other prisoners. When about half way

on their journey, as they stopped for water, Mr. Judson begged of the lamine-woon to allow him to ride his horse a mile or two, as he could proceed no further in that dreadful state. But a scornful, malignant look was all the reply that was made. He then requested *Captain Laird, who was tied with him*, and who was a strong, healthy man, to allow him to take hold of his shoulder, as he was fast sinking. This the kind-hearted man granted for a mile or two, but then found the additional burden unsupportable." It thus appears, from Mrs. Judson's account, that Dr. Judson and Captain Laird were tied together in this horrid march to Oungpen-la; and, doubtless, they were close to each other, if not chained together, when there. And could the godly missionary be so near a godless merchant and not seek his spiritual welfare, by unfolding to him the value of the pearl of great price? No, all the severe trials of the missionary did not

make him forget to devote himself to his peculiar work of winning souls, even when in “the inner prison, with his feet fast in the stocks.” He conversed with his fellow-prisoner, and in his physical captivity showed him the faithful saying that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and deliver from the more dreadful yoke of a spiritual bondage. It does not appear that the truth had taken immediate effect on Captain Laird’s mind; but the seed of the Word had found a lodgment in his heart, and, if he was not then converted, that truth afterwards sprang up and bore fruit unto holiness. For, when he was thrown into prison, he was in good worldly circumstances; but when he was liberated, he found that almost his entire property, to the value of £30,000, had been destroyed (and he had no good reason to expect that any compensation would be granted), and he who had been successful in business, and con-

nected with the Burmese nobility by marriage, and on terms of familiarity with the Burman court, found himself emerging from the horrors of captivity to endure the equally mortifying horrors of misfortune. To a man who had spent the best period of his life in the prosecution of successful commercial enterprise, and who had been the architect of his own fortune, such a reverse of circumstances and loss of position must have come with the keenest poignancy. Then, when he was a ruined man, did he have the favoring circumstances for meditating on what his devoted fellow-prisoner had taught him in the horrid dungeons of the cruel Burman despot. He became, eventually, an altered man; and the tone and matter of his letters to his relatives in Scotland became completely changed. He wrote "beautiful letters," we are told,—letters full of the "great salvation," and of solemn warning to those near and dear to him, tell-

ing them plainly and affectionately that it would profit them nothing although they should gain the whole world, if they lost their own souls, and imploring them to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. He wrote with the utmost respect for Dr. Judson, and ascribed the great change that he had experienced to the kind instruction in divine things which he had received from his lips in the dark days of their "sore bondage." I do not believe that Dr. Judson ever knew that he had been the means of leading him to turn to the Lord, nor do I know whether he had any intercourse with him after the period of their liberation. It is not likely. After his death, when his friends wrote to Dr. Judson, asking if he could give them any particulars about their relative's last days, he replied that he could not; but he said that the last time he was in Rangoon, he saw a funeral passing along the street, and on inquiring

whose it was, he was informed it was that of his former fellow-prisoner, Captain Laird.

“Why were we permitted to go? what good has been effected?” are questions which appeared to stagger faith at that time; but now that the missionaries have ceased from their labors and gone to their reward, these questions appear, to some extent, to have their answer in the narration we have just given. And as there may be many of God’s beloved servants passing through fiery trials for the endurance of which they may not be able to see any immediate result, such as would seem to be intended by them, we would kindly counsel them not to be too hasty in concluding that the period occupied in passing through such trials has been “time lost to the mission” for God their Saviour, which they have given themselves to prosecute. Heavy trials, severe afflictions, crushing circumstances, the alienation of friends, distressing misapprehensions of

the church, the bitter persecution of the world, embarrassing pecuniary troubles, and all that tends to depress the mind, lacerate the feelings, burden the soul, and incumber the circumstances, may be experienced by those that are dear to God and devoted to the spiritual welfare of souls; and they may be apt to say, If the Lord be for us, and if we are to be employed in his service, and used for the promotion of his cause and glory, why are these things permitted to come upon us, and wherefore are we kept in "the depths" of trouble? But let God's dear people learn to be still, and know that he is the all-wise God, and that he never does any thing with them without having a purpose to serve by it. In such painful circumstances, when we can get no light upon the way God is taking with us, let us submit cheerfully to all his arrangements, and listen with child-like meekness to his salutary teaching, when he says, "I will bring

the blind by a way they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

"Holy brethren," have you not been led to engage in service of which you little thought? And have not some of you been led—much against your feelings, inclinations, early prejudices, and to your worldly disadvantage—to engage in some department of the Lord's work? All of us who have come through certain departments of deep Christian experience have been led to do many things quite opposite to what we intended to do; and we have had a rich blessing in yielding to the evident leadings of the Lord. Endeavor to know God's will by studying his Word, observing his providence, and considering the promptings of his Spirit within you when asking counsel at

the throne of grace ; and, having ascertained his will with reference to *your service*, do it at all hazards, and at any sacrifice. He gave his Son for you, and you must hold yourselves in readiness even to die for him, if you would show yourselves truly and wholly devoted to his service and the promotion of his glory. “Ye are not your own ; for ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”





VI.

THE PATH OF LIGHT.

PROVIDENCE is an admirable expositor of revelation. The Bible, like the sun, remains stationary; and we, like the earth, in being moved round it, are enlightened.

Or, to employ another figure, the Bible, hung up, like some well-painted portrait, upon the great wall of Time, follows us with its lustrous eye in all our movements. We are instructed in divine truth, and enlightened “in all spiritual knowledge and understanding,” by being put upon an evershifting plane of observation by the providence of God. Just as an ever-varying landscape is exhibited to the passengers in a railway

train as it proceeds on its iron-pathway, so an increase of spiritual knowledge is communicated to us as we are passing along the way of life. The Lord has graciously given a revelation of himself, and promises likewise to give the Holy Spirit to make it known; but he has also ordained the circumstances in which its various parts are likely to make the deepest impression; and it is made “spirit” and “life” to the soul only through that particular medium. We well know that at certain times, when all is running smooth, we may read much of the Word of God, and yet but a small part, if any, of it fixes itself in our minds, or passes like a transfusion through our souls, and no good impression whatever is made upon our hearts; but as the beauties of the verdant hills are brought out by the overpassing clouds, so the truths of Holy Scripture are brought out by the trying providences which pass over us. Luther

placed “temptations” or trials among those things which made a minister, by opening to him the hidden mysteries of divine truth. And, verily, the reformer was right. Afflictions, temptations, and trials are absolutely necessary to the formation of that pure perceptive state of mind which enables a minister or a private Christian to apprehend the real spirit and bearing of the Word of God. Trying providences are frequently employed as instruments of conversion. No providence, however peculiar, can change the heart,—that is the work of the Spirit of God; but providences may be used as preparatory to the great change. It was so in the case of the late Dr. Chalmers, of undying memory. He began his ministry in an unconverted state, but was led by afflictive dispensations, and the circumstance of writing on Christianity for the press, to see the truths of the gospel clearly. “During the autumn of the same year” (1807), says

Mr. Anderson in his "Reminiscences," "he was attacked with a severe illness, and his long confinement under this proved a most momentous season of his life. Recent bereavements in his father's family, and his own affliction, now led him to look at human life in a very different aspect from viewing it merely as a gay, thoughtless scene, or without comparing it in his mind's eye with the magnitude of eternity. This was the first stage of the most eventful period of his life, and he came out of it an altered man." It was then that his mind was opened to understand the doctrines of free grace; and ever after he preached the faith which once he destroyed. And the providences of God, especially his afflictive dispensations, have been rendered useful to many others in less prominent spheres, in placing them within the influence of "*the grace of God that bringeth salvation.*"

That remarkable Christian, Mrs. Mary

Winslow,* was led by the providence of God in such a manner as by his grace to become acquainted with the glorious gospel of Christ. She was at a ball one evening. She received much attention, and her pride was gratified. She was then just married, and surrounded with every thing that could give earthly happiness. But she was unhappy, and her unhappiness remained with her until she knew the Lord Jesus. “On returning from the ball,” says she, “I took a hasty review of the evening I had passed, as I lay upon my sleepless pillow. The glitter, the music, the dance, the excitement, the attention, the pleasure, — all passed before me. But, oh ! I felt a want I could not describe. I sighed ; and, throwing my arm over my head, whispered to myself these expressive words, ‘*Is this all ?*’ I felt at the moment that if this were all the happi-

* *Life in Jesus ; or, Memoirs of Mrs. Mary Winslow.* By her son, Octavius Winslow, D. D.

ness the world could bestow, then was there a lack I knew not how to supply, and a void I could not fill. I had reached the very summit of earthly bliss, and found it to fall short of what my heart craved and my soul required. From this time I grew more fond of retirement, and less inclined to mingle with the gay world. I felt that what I had been pursuing in the early part of my life was not happiness. I turned from it with a sensation of loathing, and sought in solitude what I had never found in the brilliant and crowded walks of life. I thought that there must be a state where real happiness was to be found. In this condition I continued for years, striving to keep the law and shape my course by 'the whole duty of man.' I endeavored to walk so as to please God; but again and again my best resolutions were broken. These feelings I concealed from all around me, for I would not for the world have breathed a hint that

I was unhappy, to the dearest friend. I saw every one around me apparently happy in the possession of the world, which had lost its charm for me. I now sought peace of mind in domestic enjoyment. I was encircled by my children, possessed of a husband who anticipated my fondest wish, and my heart could sigh for nothing of earthly bliss I did not possess, — and still I was *unhappy*. I was a *sinner*, and this secret conviction beclouded every prospect and imbittered every cup.” Such leadings of the Lord are very useful; they bring us to see the point and truthfulness of those portions of Scripture which set forth the vanity and unsatisfying nature of all earthly things. The experience described in the book of Ecclesiastes must be reached by ladies and gentlemen who have been born to all the pleasures, comforts, and abundance which the carnal heart could desire, before they are likely to search the Scriptures with a desire to obtain

lasting happiness, and realize the spiritual joys described in "the Song of Songs." They must be made to say of the things of time, "Vanity of vanities, *all is vanity*," before they will say of Jesus, "He is altogether lovely, — he is all our salvation and all our desire." In fact, every soul that is brought to Christ must, in some degree, feel the emptiness of earth's wells of enjoyment before the truth concerning a satisfying portion in Jesus be truly and vividly apprehended. How many are at all times laboring and heavy-laden, like Mrs. Winslow, — seeking rest and finding none! There are far more restless, unhappy, thirsting, longing souls in the gay world than we think. Many of the sons and daughters of fashion, as they flit from scene to scene, and seem to be reveling amid the most satisfying joys of earth, are unhappy when alone, sad at heart, and miserable. Such was Mrs. Winslow's condition. "I was unhappy," she says;

“at times miserable; my weary soul thirsted for what it had not, and yet I could not answer myself and say what that one thing was.”

But so great was the pressure of her mental disquietude, that her health gave way. Looking narrowly one day into the meaning of the opening verse of the sixty-third Psalm, I was struck to find the language so accurately describe a circumstance of frequent occurrence in the case of sincere and earnest inquirers. “My flesh longeth for thee!” says the exiled mourner. What is the exact meaning of that striking expression? It signifies, “grows pale.” His countenance, naturally ruddy (1 Sam. xvi. 12), became pale from the intensity of his inward longing after God. How forcible! His whole being was so intensely exercised that his inward condition of earnest desire for the presence of God might be read from his altered and emaciated bodily appearance.

This experience is not peculiar to the royal psalmist; many an inquirer has been so intensely occupied with the thoughts which prey upon the mind of the tempest-tossed, that the pallor of waning health has made its appearance on the fair, fresh, and ruddy cheek of joyous youth, to the grief of affectionate and anxious friends. It was so in the case of Mrs. Winslow; and her husband, thinking that her unhappiness and consequent unhealthiness arose from the solitude of their rural residence, was led to leave his ancestral home at Romford, in Essex, for a residence in London, which was the providence that brought her into contact with the gospel of Christ. She was still blind with reference to the way of peace; but the Lord was leading her to Calvary, where Jesus made peace by the blood of his cross. He was, in truth, fulfilling his own gracious promise, "I will bring the blind by a way they knew not;

I will lead them in paths that they have not known ; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

She heard, for the first time in her life, the precious GOSPEL OF PEACE. "This," she writes, "was what I wanted to know for many years, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save poor sinners. I was a sinner, and wanted to be saved. Oh, how eagerly I listened and drank in every word ! I had been in vain trying to work out my salvation ; but my work always fell short, and left me as poor and miserable as ever. Now was held out to me the hope that I might be saved by the work of another, — the work of Jesus Christ." But still she had great questionings about the way in which a sinner could be justified. Nevertheless, the truth that a sinner could be saved had been lodged in her mind. And

the truthfulness of God her Saviour, when he says, "*Ask and ye shall receive,*" had also been deeply impressed upon her mind, as she searched the Scriptures during the quiet hours of night, as she watched by the side of her sick child. She fell on her knees, and pleaded this promise. "I did not wrestle so much," she says, "for my salvation, as to know *how* I could be saved as a helpless sinner that could do nothing. I arose from my knees, and again took my Bible. I read and compared Scripture with Scripture; but the one part appeared to contradict the other, and my mind was left in darkness and perplexity. Again I carried the promise to the throne of grace, and again wrestled with the Lord. I returned to my Bible, but it was yet a sealed book. The third time I ventured near the Lord, still pleading his own gracious promise, '*Ask and ye shall receive.*' In an instant, light broke in upon my soul! Jesus stood before me, and

spoke these blessed words, '*I am thy salvation!*' I hailed the glad tidings; my heart and soul responded. Jesus was with me! He had himself spoken,—I had seen the Lord and heard his voice; my soul was saved, my burden was gone; the grave-clothes in which I had been so long confined fell off; my spirit was free, and I seemed to soar toward heaven in the sweetest, richest enjoyment, my heart filled with a joy unspeakable. I arose from my knees to adore and praise and bless his holy name. Oh, what a night was that! never, never to be forgotten! I had seen Jesus! It was no vision of the bodily senses that I saw; but I had no more doubt that I was a redeemed and pardoned sinner—that I had seen Christ and held communion with him who died that I might live—than I had of my own existence. It was with difficulty I could refrain from calling up the whole house to hear what the Lord had done for

my soul. It has since been evident to myself that when the Holy Ghost gave me the promise to plead, he also gave me a measure of faith to credit God for its fulfillment; and, in answering the prayer of simple faith, Christ came into my soul with a full and free salvation. *'I am thy salvation!'* This was good news indeed, fresh from heaven. Christ was mine, heaven was mine; all care and sorrow had vanished, and I was as happy as I could be in the body. I had found what I had long sought. I had been in search of real happiness for years, and in one night I found it all in Jesus. God's richest treasury had been thrown open to my view; and in him I found all I wanted for time and eternity." How very wonderfully the providential and spiritual leadings of the Lord wrought to produce that state of mind which made her thirst for higher enjoyments than those which this world can supply; and how graciously the Lord opened

her eyes, and made her find “all in Jesus!” “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.”

It is thus that the Lord leads his ransomed people to a saving knowledge of himself, and to obtain spiritual illumination on those passages that contain the gospel of Christ in all its fullness and freeness. It is an all-important period in our life, when we are led clearly to apprehend the divine method of justification by faith alone,—free, full, and everlasting salvation entirely by the perfect work of Jesus, and not by our own imperfect works. But after “being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” and after drawing near to God, “with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,” we need to be divinely instructed in other truths, that we may not be always engaged in laying the

foundation, but that we may be building upon it and going on to perfection.

Mrs. Winslow had made proof of the *truthfulness* of God, and she must also make proof of his *faithfulness* as a covenant-keeping God. Her beloved husband was seized with a severe illness. Soon after, she herself became dangerously ill. Her illness led to her husband giving up his commission in the army, which was the cause of much disappointment to her, for "she looked forward to the army as the future profession of her sons. But greater trials were before her. Some years after Captain Winslow's retirement from the army, his ample fortune became seriously impaired through ill-advised and disastrous investments. It was this circumstance — an important link in the chain of events, evolving God's purposes of love — that suggested a removal to the United States of America, as offering wider

scope for a family composed almost entirely of boys, and a place of residence more favorable to resources now sadly crippled." Mrs. Winslow, accompanied by her family of ten children, crossed the Atlantic, and her husband was to follow. But she was to find in the home of her adoption trials more severe than any she had yet experienced. Her infant daughter sickened and died ; and, before her corpse was buried, the melancholy intelligence reached her that her beloved husband was no more ! "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts ; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Into that mournful class of Scripture passages she now saw as she had never done ; but she also became more fully acquainted with that class which speaks of the faithfulness of God. A widow with a large family, and in reduced worldly circumstances, a stranger in a strange land,—what was she to do ? The first consolation which entered her

stricken heart was communicated by Newton's hymn, so applicable to her own case :

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and every grace ;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer ;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once he'd answer my request ;
And by his love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart ;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, — with his own hand he seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe ;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this ? I trembling cried ;
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death ?
“ ’Tis in this way,” the Lord replied,
“ I answer prayer for grace and faith.

“ Those inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free ;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may’st seek thy all in me.”

The Christian widow was in some measure comforted, and could now trust in the Lord. She could cast her burden on the Lord, and repose in peace upon his faithful Word. One night, which she spent in prayer, was a memorable one. Toward the dawn of day a voice seemed audibly to utter these words in her ear and heart, — “ *I will be a Father to thy fatherless children.*” “ Years have passed since then,” she writes, “ and the Lord has not for one moment forgotten his promise. But I take the promise to extend beyond this poor dying world. I believe he designs to be their Father to all

eternity, and that I shall meet all, *all* my children in heaven! How often have I gone and pleaded this promise before him, and have always found my faith increased! And still my faith holds out; *for He is faithful that hath promised.*" Thus was she led to know the power of those exceeding great and precious promises which contain comforting assurances based upon the unchanging faithfulness of God. And as years passed away, she found that the providence of God wonderfully assisted her in obtaining fresh and impressive knowledge of the truths of God's holy Word.

And so it is with all God's people. They are led by a way they knew not, to obtain a deep, personal, refreshing acquaintance with his "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" which are hid in Christ. It is comparatively easy to acquire a natural knowledge of divine things from human systems; but God only can impart a spiritual knowl-

edge of divine things. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” By the teaching of the Spirit of God, the simple peasant will enter more fully into the pith and marrow of divine things than could the greatest scholar or most learned theologian by the utmost efforts of his unaided mental powers. This was seen in the case of the accomplished and talented Hewitson and the young peasant he met at Leamington. “My intercourse,” he writes, — “my intercourse with the young man soon gave me ground to conclude that if my theoretic knowledge of gospel truths was greater than his, he, unlike myself, had experienced their sanctifying power. Truly his was the better portion.” But after he had been taught these truths by the leading and enlightening of the Spirit of God, the change soon became obvi-

ous to others, and they felt that he now possessed a something new and indescribable, — a something of which they, in turn, knew nothing. When he returned to his village-home for the summer, “his relatives at once marked the great change.” The very night he arrived, he spoke to all the family most solemnly on the concerns of eternity; and the whole village soon saw that he was another man. He had been known hitherto as the great scholar and the exemplary divinity-student; but now they “took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus.” “That,” said he one day soon after his return, laying his hand upon the open Bible, — “that shall henceforth be my daily study; I desire to converse through it daily with God!” “The purpose was not unaccomplished. The Bible may be said to have thenceforth become his library. No longer regarding it as a mere hieroglyphic to be curiously examined by the eye of the scholar, he came to it with

the heart of a child to listen to the voice of his Father. And out of it he learned that living, fresh divinity which impregnated with its savor his whole future conversation and correspondence and ministry.”* And how blessed were the discoveries he made in the field of Scripture! He was led by the Spirit and dealings of God to discover there many spiritual truths which he had never before perceived; and among others that which bathes all the rest in noontide radiance,—the coming and the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

It requires much experience of the dealings of God to make us receive the higher and more distinguishing truths of Christianity,—especially those that are unpopular, and which we have been *taught* to reject; but, if we would be fresh and fruitful Christians, we must lay aside all prejudice, and

* *Memoir of the Rev. W. H. Hewiston.* By the Rev. John Baillie.

allow the Lord to teach us from the fountain of inspiration "all the counsel of God." There is an impetuosity about the young Christian which frequently renders him impatient of those truths of God's Word which run directly counter to his own preconceived notions. The doctrine of Jehovah's supremacy and absolute sovereignty is so repugnant to the notions of fallen human nature, that it is not likely to be received with spiritual apprehension and cordiality for a considerable period after conversion. But it is a blessed experience to be brought to submit willingly to the most humbling truths. It is a happy thing to be shown by the Spirit that God is on the throne, and that we must lie low in the dust at his footstool, and be dealt with by him according to his own sovereign will. It is no easy matter to submit with adoring complacency to such sentiments as these:—"No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me

draw him," — "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," — "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

The following excerpt from a young man's letter forms a very appropriate illustration of this part of our subject: — "I must confess, with much sorrow and shame, that I have been half an infidel in my time; but by

a chain of circumstances, the end of which the God of all grace manifestly held in his own hand, I was brought under the ministry of a living evangelical servant of Christ, and received many good impressions. About the same time I was brought into contact with a book on the ministry, which proved the turning and determining point of my life. I shut myself out from society for a considerable period, and gave myself to prayer and the study of God's Word. I was also led by a manifest providence to speak to others of the gospel of Jesus. But, in my zeal, I did not at all times think and act wisely. I earnestly desired to see sinners coming to Jesus ; and I preached almost exclusively those truths which I deemed encouraging, and could not bear to hear others, because I thought they would discourage poor sinners who were seeking salvation. I am still of opinion that it requires much spiritual wisdom and discrimination to preach

the higher truths of the Christian system ; and also that the great thing needed by the world is the gospel that ‘ Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.’ But although a man holds such views, he need not feel irritated when he comes in contact with these sublime doctrines. At the time I refer to, I felt annoyed when I heard them preached, when I met with them in books, and even when I came upon them in the Word of God ! I bless the Lord I can now receive them without irksomeness, and rejoice in them as one that finds great spoil. I was attending the Divinity Hall when I was delivered from my fruitless warfare with the truth. I was hearing a course of lectures on the subject of my aversion, and felt so terribly annoyed that I shut my notebook and wrote nothing ; but sat in sullenness, with a heart boiling with opposition to the solemn truths which were treated of. I said to my room-mate, when we got home,

that I believed such teaching was enough to flood the land with infidelity ; and I stoutly averred that no honest man could hold such views and preach an unfettered gospel. He was better acquainted with the truth than I was, and reasoned the matter with me, bringing forward the most cogent arguments to prove his side of the question ; but after a time he found it was useless, for he saw that I was determined to hold to my own opinions. The point to be settled must be settled *practically*, for I would have nothing to do with it *theoretically*. And thus, in the gracious providence of God, it was settled. I must hear a minister holding these views preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Nothing short of that would convince me. I saw it announced by placards that Dr. Winslow, of Leamington, would preach in town at such places. I had read some of his papers in a religious periodical, and one which gave an account

of a revival had particularly interested me. I was therefore ready to hear him, and accordingly repaired to the chapels where he was expected to preach. In the forenoon he preached from Matt. iv. 16, but appeared to be much straitened, and did not make a very favorable impression. I went, however, to hear him again on the afternoon of that same Lord's day, and heard him preach, with evident power and demonstration of the Spirit, from Psalm lxxii. 6. He brought out fully the highest doctrines of the Christian system, but in such a way, and with such accompanying power of the Holy Spirit, that I felt my prejudices and opposition entirely subdued. I was a new man from that day. I had been converted for a considerable time, but this was a kind of second conversion. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God had shined into my heart more fully than before, and I lay in the dust, saying, 'Woe is me, for I am un-

done, . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' I could never forget the solemnity of that afternoon ; and ever since I have preached with joy all the doctrines of God's holy Word."

And with reference to the spiritual knowledge of *all the truths of God's Word*, the particular background of providence suited to each is necessary to a saving and refreshing view ; so that, when we are led into any very difficult or trying circumstances, instead of concluding that the Lord hath forsaken us, and hath forgotten to be gracious, we should rather conclude that the Lord is leading us into these new circumstances to give us new discoveries of his own truth and glory. The instructions of God's Word being intended to correspond with the foreseen circumstances of all his people, we must have the circumstances, whether joyous or sorrowful, before these instructions can become "spirit and life" to our souls. Deep-

ly-tried friend, you have no difficulty in understanding my meaning, for you know that God's Word has been the sweetest when your cup has been the bitterest, and that the bitterness of your trials procured for you all that sweetness. Let us, then, "trust in the Lord for ever." "The Lord is *my* shepherd, I *shall* not want;" though he lead me through the valley of Baca, I shall always find there some refreshing Elim with its wells of water and overshadowing palms.

We limit not the truth of God to our poor reach of mind,
By notions of our day and sect, crude, partial, and confined.

No, let a new and better hope within our hearts be stirred;
The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth
from his Word.

Who dares to bind to his dull sense the oracles of Heaven,
For all the nations, tongues, and climes, and all the ages
given;

That universe how much unknown! that ocean unexplored!

The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth
from his Word.

Darkling our great forefathers went the first steps of the
way ;

'Twas but the dawning, yet to grow into the perfect day.
And grow it shall ; — our glorious sun more fervid rays
afford :

The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth
from his Word.

The valleys passed, ascending still, our souls would
higher climb,

And look down from supernal hights on all the bygone
time.

Upward we press, — the air is clear, and the sphere-
music heard ;

The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth
from his Word.

O Father, Son, and Spirit, send us increase from above ;
Enlarge, expand all Christian souls to comprehend thy
love ;

And make us to go on to know, with nobler powers con-
ferred,

The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth
from his Word.



VII.

THE PATH OF LIFE.

TRAVELERS tell us that outside the walls of Florian, a suburb of Valletta, in the Island of Malta, there is a convent where the monks, as they die, are carried down to the vaults and stuck up in niches in the wall ; and there, arrayed in all the habiliments of their order, they are kept in their erect position by a chain going round their waists ; while the stone has, it is said, the singular property of preserving them for a considerable period from decay. The sight must be a sickening as well as a solemnizing one. What a mockery of living monkery, to stick up the dead monks there ! Yet these dead

men shall live. They now have all the appearance of life, in the glimmering light which falls upon them ; but, though dressed and standing erect as when alive, they are in reality *dead*, and are kept in their present position merely by artificial means.

And it is sad to think that this mimicry of continued life forms a too appropriate illustration of the state in which even true Christians are sometimes found. The breath of the divine life — the life of God in their souls — appears to have been extinguished. They are still clothed in all the habiliments of their Christian profession, but they are now only bound to the *preserving* Rock by the strong chain that keeps them in their erect position ; and their existence is *artificial*, not *vital*, — at least they are not conscious of vitality. Their spiritual life is suspended ; but they shall yet live. Such was the experience of the psalmist, when he penned the following mournful lines : —

O Lord God of my salvation,
I cry day and night unto thee.
Let my prayer come before thee :
Incline thine ear unto my cry ;
For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draweth nigh unto the grave.
I am counted with those who go down into the pit.
I am as a man who hath no strength,
Laid low among the dead ;
Like the slain who lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more,
And they are cut off from thy hand.
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,
In darkness, in the shadow of death.
Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,
And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.
I am shut up, and I can not come forth ;
Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction.
Lord, I have called daily upon thee,
I have stretched out my hands unto thee.
Lord, why castest thou off my soul ?
Why hidest thou thy face from me ?
While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

But the Lord does not forsake his people.
He despiseth not his prisoners. The very

next psalm commences with the exclamation of deliverance experienced: "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever." So sudden is the change from *death*, with its mourning, to life, with its joy and song.

It is certainly the most trying of all God's dispensations to have his Spirit withdrawn, and to be in that condition when we are compelled to say, "He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead: therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me, *my heart within me is desolate.*" But it is such an experience that teaches us that the divine life within us is not a lamp which we can trim, oil, and keep burning, but which must be trimmed by the High Priest of our profession, and made to burn brightly by having a continued supply of the oil of divine grace communicated by "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." And it is such an experience that will lead us earnestly to pray for Jehovah's quickening grace.

This melancholy, death-like state of soul, is commonly brought on by indulging in known sin, and retaining an unpurged conscience. The conscience must be kept in a healthy and thorough working condition ; for it being to our spiritual existence what the stomach is to our physical constitution, if it is not kept in a state of health and vigor, our whole spiritual constitution must become disordered and unhealthy. It was indulgence in known sin that brought David the king into the dead and dangerous condition of soul which produced that hardness of heart, unbelief, and forgetfulness of God, which led to his numbering the people, and to the consequent terrible infliction of the judgments of God. And as long as he continued in the sullen, carnal, unconfessing state, his “moisture was turned into the drought of summer.” But as soon as he confessed his sin, in the thoroughly penitent and ingenuous manner recorded in the fifty-

first psalm, his conscience was cleared ; and the first burst of returning life formed itself into the joyous exclamation, “ Oh, the blessedness of transgression forgiven ! sin covered ! ”

There are few, we believe, who understand what Bunyan means by his “ Valley of the Shadow of Death ; ” but it has a terrible meaning to those who pass through it ; and as “ the path of life ” lies right through it, if we would have “ life more abundantly ” we must, at one time or other, walk through its dangerous and solitary gloom. I believe Bunyan meant, by “ The Valley of the Shadow of Death,” that experience of true Christians which is commonly known by “ walking in darkness,” — having to grope their way under the hidings of God’s countenance, while their own minds are filled with confusion, and they are so perplexed with the temptations of Satan that they are at their wit’s end. It is difficult to walk in

it, for the way is narrow, the darkness is dreadful, and there is "a deep ditch on the one side, and a quag on the other." When God's countenance is withdrawn, when the mind is confused, when Satan is suggesting blasphemies and every pollution and wickedness, when the breathings of the Spirit are not realized, when the Word becomes powerless and the heart gets out of living fellowship with Jesus, how apt we are to depart from that narrow way and fall into the "quag" of outward sin, as did King David; or into the deep ditch of erroneous doctrines, as did many in the churches of Galatia! Those only who know "the hardships and adversities of the Christian life," are acquainted experimentally with "The Valley of the Shadow of Death," and can enter with sympathetic feeling into the following: "Owing to bodily weakness, you, as well as myself, are more exposed to the fiery darts which Satan is ever seeking to

cast through the arrow-slip of imagination into the citadel of the heart — doubts, fears, anxieties, misgivings, despondencies — than if you were enjoying vigor of bodily health and buoyancy of animal spirits. Invalids, and especially those laboring under diseases which have the effect of depressing the mind, — an effect not to be removed wholly by any thing but the removal of the cause itself, — these seem to be the forlorn hope of the Redeemer's army, set forward to the endurance of greater spiritual hardships, and to more desperate encounters with the enemy of souls, than other soldiers of the cross. But 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;' and our faith overcomes *by identifying us with the Son of God*. Faith stands in the battle-field and cries, 'Jesus, the Son of God, anointed Saviour, — he who knew no sin, — was made sin for me; and I am the righteousness of God in him!' This is at once the armor, the war-

cry, the battle, the victory, and the triumph. Resisted in this gospel-spirit, Satan is turned to flight, and the believer remains master of the field.”* Or, to quote the experience of another: “I thought, when I began to read a volume of precious Christian experience, that I was to be quickened by it, as I had been by another some time ago; but I have read half through it in a miserably low tone of spirit. This train of thought passed through my mind, and produced darkness and unbelief: ‘You act as if you could command the life-giving grace of the Holy Spirit. Besides, your expectation is presumption. How can you expect to have this volume blessed to your spiritual edification, when a fortnight ago you had such a blessed time of brokenness of heart and weeping joy over a similar one, and you have been hardening your heart, going back, and sinning against the love of God ever

* Rev. W. H. Hewitson.

since? You would live upon religious *stimulants*, and not on Christ, the bread of life; and your life is that of an occasional spiritual excitement, followed by corresponding collapse.' Here Satan seemed to say, 'Read on, and get your much-loved stimulus. I wish you great elevation and much joy.' And sin and unbelief shut me up to be derided by him; for I felt none of the breathing of the Spirit within me, and I was ashamed to look to Jesus, it was so like making Christ the minister of sin. I had wept joyfully and with a deeply-humbled spirit over the former volume; but although I read truth equally momentous and impressive, and longed far more for the blessing than I did then, there was no feeling,—the Lord was *silent* toward me. Not a tear would come, and I felt conscious none could. How dreadful this experience of '*conscious death!*'

“ Oh, how vitalizing to the soul is unin-

interrupted communion with God ! What freshness, energy, and liveliness it would insure ! I would then grow in grace, and would no longer be so pale-faced, spiritually, as I have lately been. Angels will surely wonder at my present emaciated appearance ; and devils — the more knowing and surgeon-like of them — may have predicted the day when I am likely to expire ! I feel no spiritual life within me ; but surely I am not to be left to perish utterly ! Oh, dreadful thought ! die eternally ! But if I would live, I must eat ; and if I would eat that which is good, I must come to God for it, grudging neither the distance nor the difficult traveling in the present *Crimean* state of the roads. My state is wretched, but before it can be bettered I must come to my Father's house, where 'there is bread enough and to spare,' — otherwise 'I perish with hunger.' At present I seem to be trying to live, like the tuneless birds of winter during

a protracted snow-storm, upon the precarious and accidental provision of spare and slender crumbs around the doors of a house where the inmates are feasting daily on nourishing and ample fare.

“Spiritual freshness and vigor of soul can not be obtained in such circumstances. I remember once saying to an honest countryman, who, after a day of hard labor, had walked five miles to hear a sermon, and who had to walk the same distance returning, — ‘You have come a long way; you will be very tired before you get back.’ His answer was an unfinished sentence, but very significant, — ‘But when there is the desire, sir.’ I quite understood him: ‘When there is the Spirit-imparted desire in a man’s soul for the bread of life, ten miles of road are reckoned nothing by him.’ Had I but this *desire*, I would think nothing of traveling ten miles in spirit before God at the throne of grace, to obtain a fresh, invigor-

ating supply of 'the bread of life.' I have a weak frame, and I have sometimes shortened my devotional exercises out of compassion for my fragile system, — for there is nothing so *wearing* as prayer in certain states, as sickly people know too well; but I fear I have been injured in spirit by listening too frequently to the carnal advice of nature, — 'Spare thyself.' But now that I am better I feel no more *desire* than formerly, and am as apt to shrink from intense and continued application of spirit in waiting upon God. If I could travel comfortably by a first-class express train, or send a cheap message by telegraph, and have little or no trouble, I should have bread from heaven in great abundance all the year over. But having to submit to the old process of walking for it in the present state of affairs, alters the case very materially, and leaves me destitute of a sufficient supply to support life. Create within me a clean

heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Give me the heart that will make me willing to travel any distance for the precious bread of life. This *desolateness* of soul is hard to bear. Lord, quicken me by thy almighty Spirit. Oh for a softened heart, a spiritual mind, a soul filled with the life of God! *Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit faileth. Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."*

The path of life is indeed a path we naturally know not, and which we should never know but for the Lord's gracious leadings. We are to be followers of Jesus in this as well as in every thing else; and his path of life lay through the valley of the shadow of death. He who is emphatically *the Life* passed through the mental anguish and suffering of the garden of Gethsemane and the cross of Calvary, and lay under the gloom

and darkness of the grave, before he became “the Living One to the ages of ages,” possessed of a “resurrection life,” which is not subject to decay or death: and we, too, being reckoned as one with him, must “know the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable unto his death,” if we would “know him and the power of his resurrection,” and “walk in newness of life, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

It was when the beloved disciple *fell as dead* at Immanuel’s feet, when he beheld his glory as the risen and reigning One, that he had to make the following blessed record: “He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was the dead One, and, behold, I am the living One to the ages of ages, Amen; and have the keys of the unseen and of death.” And he not only, by this, showed him the path of life, but he opened the unseen and showed him the path

of the church's life. And whoever reads the book of Revelation will have no difficulty in perceiving that it lies directly through the midst of the valley of the shadow of death ; but on the further verge of that path shines " the bright and morning star," which ushers in the period of resurrection life and eternal glory, — and " there shall be no night there."

Wherefore, brethren, fear not, when passing through the most painful spiritual experience. Jesus lives, and he says to us, " I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Your bitter experience will be made effectual by the grace of God in expelling levity, vain confidence, self-sufficiency, and self-exultation ; and while the exuberance of feeling and activity which characterize the babe in Christ may leave you, a mellowness of genuine Christian experience will be produced, and a deep-flow-

ing tide of spiritual life will remain, which will augment in depth and volume as it moves noiselessly onward to the great ocean of "life everlasting."





VIII.

THE PATH OF GLORY.

THE Lord of Glory gives us this as the last revelation of himself: "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star." How full of meaning! How deeply instructive! In the Apocalypse our Lord has given us an epitome of the history of his church's course through this evil and rebellious world, from the times of his immediate followers "till the day of redemption," when "the holy city, New Jerusalem, descends from heaven," illumined by "the glory of God," and when "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory

and honor into it." Here, as we have already said, the attentive reader will find that the church's path lies directly through the midst "of the darkness of this world;" and in such circumstances she needed to have her thoughts directed to the coming glory and the Morning Star. But why should David be mentioned? Why should the exalted Jesus say, "I am the root and the offspring of David," at the same time that he says, "I am the bright and Morning Star?" The two references are most appropriate to the circumstances. The Lord Jesus speaks as the anointed, rightful, but rejected King, giving his faithful followers intimation both of danger and deliverance. He is David's Lord and David's son,—and he has a right to sit on "the throne of his father David," swaying the scepter of righteousness "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." But the world has rejected him, and "the god of

this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of *the gospel of the glory of Christ* should shine unto them.” David’s experience is typical of the experience of David’s Lord.

There never was a man so tried and persecuted as was the anointed David, save “the man Christ Jesus.” He was hunted “like a partridge upon the mountains” by Saul, the God-rejected and condemned prince, simply because he was God’s approved and anointed king. His path to the glory of royal and actual dominion was often dark and crooked, but his God fulfilled his gracious promise in his experience, and “made darkness light before him, and crooked things straight;” and, after living for years the life of a compulsory outlaw in the kingdom God had given him, and even after being forced to retire from it altogether, and to reside for a time elsewhere, he was eventually seated upon the throne of Jehovah as

ruler over his people. In the deepest sorrows of persecution and rejection, he could still trust in his God, because he knew that he was his chosen King, — his anointed Sovereign; and he could even then address his enemies in the language of triumphant expostulation, — “O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn *my glory* into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? But know that *the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself*; the Lord will hear when I call unto him.”

Jesus, “the King of glory,” was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and his disciples beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. They saw his glory on the mount of transfiguration, when Moses and Elias — representatives of his risen and translated church — appeared with him, and his awe-struck followers fell down before him, and heard him approved of God, as his beloved Son,

in whom he is well pleased, and whom he had set over his holy hill of Zion. But “he came unto his own, and his own received him not.” “He is despised and rejected of men.” They would not have him to reign over them; but, at the instigation of “the prince of this world,” “their father the devil,” they took him by wicked hands and crucified him, — thus showing at once their enmity to God, and their determination to pour the utmost shame, ignominy, and contempt upon his chosen King. But, notwithstanding all their rage and opposition, “He must reign till his enemies be made his footstool.” Although rejected by man, he is not rejected of God. On the contrary, he has been exalted to the throne of his Father in heaven, “crowned with glory and honor,” and he has received “a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things un-

der the earth, and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!*” Now Jesus’ word to his disciples is, “Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones.” The glorified Head is in heaven, the suffering members are on earth, and, if they would enter into the kingdom, they must do it “through much tribulation,” for they can not otherwise “know the fellowship of his sufferings,” and be made “conformable unto his death.” “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; it is enough that the disciple be as his master, and the servant as his lord. Ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Jesus was despised, hated, oppressed, rejected, and cruci-

fied ; this was his *path of glory*, and it must be ours also. And the book of Revelation teaches us this truth with unmistakable clearness. “I am the bright and Morning Star” is therefore a cheering assurance to those who have to experience the rejection, persecution, opposition, or neglect of the world during the night-period of the church’s history. The Apocalypse, till near its close, contains the “lamentation, mourning, and woe” of a dark and cloudy night ; but eventually the Morning Star appears as the harbinger of day !

This, then, is the exhortation, which ought to speak with solemn power to the consciences and hearts of all the professed followers of the exalted Jesus, — “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in

God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, *then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*” Strange though it may seem to the men of this world, the only path of glory is the path of self-renunciation, unworldliness, and shame. It is to be feared that even true Christians frequently and grievously mistake the essential *heavenliness* of the present dispensation in so far as they are concerned, and, consequently, they greatly err in many respects, and procure for themselves much chastisement, mental anguish, and sorrow, which otherwise they might avoid.

Even with regard to the things of time, we should be willing to take God’s path of prosperity. In obedience to God, Noah expended his all upon the construction of the ark ; at the command of God, he forsook all and entered it, but he came out of it the monarch of the world ! The Lord’s way with his servant Job appeared very dark, but he eventually “made darkness light

before him." The Sabeans fell upon his oxen and asses; a great fire from heaven burnt up his sheep; the Chaldeans carried away his camels; his sons were buried under the ruins of his eldest son's house; he himself was delivered into the hands of Satan, and was heavily tried in body, soul, and fortune; but all tended to his spiritual good, and terminated in his temporal prosperity. He was brought low by afflictions, and was constrained to confess unto the Lord, in the very depths of humility, "Behold, I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." "Also the Lord gave Job *twice* as much as he had before." "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning." "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and ye have seen the end of the Lord, that the

Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.” It was a very mysterious and unpalatable way that the Lord took to show Job his love and pity. He stripped the patriarch of all he possessed, and gave him up to his adversary. Yet this was the Lord’s way. And he still shows us, in these last days, his pity and tender mercy in a similar way. He sweeps away a man’s earthly substance ; deprives him of his relatives ; allows his former friends to suspect and vex him ; permits some messenger of Satan to buffet him ; some continual “ thorn ” to lacerate his finer sensibilities, and allows the world to go entirely against him. All this is hard to bear, and it is difficult, in such circumstances, to say, “ The will of the Lord be done ; ” but “ light is sown for the righteous,” and, sooner or later, it will spring up, and yield “ the peaceable fruits of righteousness,” to the glory of God. It was a time of darkness to Joseph when he was sold by his brethren to the

Midianites, and carried down to Egypt, and there was no sign of light arising to dispel that darkness for many a day; in fact, the darkness deepened as that holy youth was cast into the state-prison under the stigma of an abominable sin. But the Lord, whom he feared and served, was watching over him, and he "made darkness light before him, and crooked things straight," and bestowed upon him unexpected prosperity and glory. In that oppressed but honorable man lay concealed the first lord of the treasury, the premier of Egypt.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Such cases clearly evince the watchful providence of God, and show us very clearly that, if it would be for their good and his glory, he is able to bestow upon his people the most abundant portion even of the good

things of this world, and, consequently, they give point to such exhortations as, "Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Nevertheless, believers are not to set before themselves the attainment of an earthly inheritance as the result of their attachment to Christ. God will certainly be no man's debtor, for he who says, "Owe no man any thing," must act out his own principle, and therefore Jesus' words shall be fulfilled: "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time: houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life." Here is the principle upon which he will act; but it is not the principle for our conduct. In the very same chapter in which

the above occurs, we find our Lord saying to the young ruler who "had great possessions," "One thing thou lackest." And what was that one thing but such faith as would produce the true Christian principle, — the world-renouncing spirit? "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross and follow me." One would think it was "the cross" Jesus was imposing upon him, when he commanded him to sell his all and give the proceeds to the poor; but no, it was after he had said this that he adds the other command, "Take up the cross and follow me," clearly teaching us that the world-renouncing spirit is the law of discipleship, and is not to be considered, in the proper sense of the term, a cross which we must bear for Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me; for whosoever will save his

life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." He sums up the matter in another place in these words: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple." In the face of such declarations as these, to entertain the idea of making the best of both worlds is to ignore the law of discipleship, and introduce a principle at variance with the spirit of the gospel. The only path to glory is the path of faith. But you may ask me, Ought we not to provide for ourselves and for our families? Certainly; "provide things honest in the sight of all men;" for "if any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Christianity nowhere enjoins us to neglect the use of means for the support of ourselves and our households; but, on the contrary, it commands us "to work and eat our own bread." But

it peremptorily forbids the heaping up of wealth, and the aggrandizement of self. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," is just as binding upon us as, "Thou shalt not kill." The teaching of Incarnate Wisdom on this point is very plain, and very precious. In the same sermon in which he teaches his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our *daily bread*," he unfolds and illustrates the duty of ceasing to be actuated by a spirit of unnecessary anxiety with reference to the things of time, and of placing entire dependence on our heavenly Father for the supply of all our wants. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The Apostle Paul, who was baptized into the spirit of him "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," says, in one of his epistles, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and

supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." We are to be anxious about nothing, but prayerful for every thing. The whole matter is found in the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." But how many professing Christians there are now whose utterance of these blessed words is a mockery of heaven! They have much goods laid up for many years, that they may be saved the trouble of daily dependence upon their heavenly Father! Jesus teaches us to ask for "daily bread,"—nothing more; and how can we do so if we have "much goods laid up for many years?" Some are in possession, it may be, of hundreds and thousands of their Lord's money for which they have no use whatever, and yet they come to the throne of grace and say, "Give us this day our daily bread!" Surely the very word "our," in the Lord's prayer, should teach such per-

sons to consider that, if they have abundance, they ought "to distribute to the necessity" of their poorer brethren. The Lord teaches us not to say "my daily bread," but "our daily bread," thus associating all disciples into one family, with our Father in heaven at the head of it. You, perhaps, "hide your Lord's money," because you have not sufficiently thought of your poorer brethren in Christ, whose prayers you might be instrumental in answering by communicating to them of your abundance. Oh, surely it is a searching thought to consider, that by withholding what it is in "the power of your hand" to bestow, you may intercept the free current of your heavenly Father's bounty, and may thus permit some who are very dear to him to live in straitened circumstances, or compel others who have a talent for publicly serving him in the kingdom of his Son to confine their usefulness to far narrower limits than they might do were

they to receive your encouragement, sympathy, and assistance. Knowing that these things are so, what weight and point does it give to the apostolic injunction! — “Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*” (1 Tim. vi. 17–19.)

But while it is the duty and privilege of the rich to “do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,” it is equally the duty of the poor as well as the rich to “*trust in the living God.*” Many sorrows shall the believer experience “who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” But happy is he who has

been convinced that "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man;" for "blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 7, 8.) There is too much "confidence in man" and too little "trust in the living God" manifested by many who profess "to live and walk by faith;" and much suffering to themselves, and not a little injury to the cause of Christ, are the inevitable consequences.

The path of glory is the life of faith; but we are such unbelieving, distrustful creatures, that we forget this great fact, and too often become assimilated to the world in the management of our temporal matters, and "pierce ourselves through with many sor-

rows.” It takes much discipline to teach us that, instead of having a moderate attachment to the things of this world, we are not to love them at all; and that instead of trusting to our own forethought, plans, and efforts, we are confidently to trust in God, and depend upon the evolutions of his gracious providence for the prosperity of all our lawful undertakings for the support of ourselves and our families. If you who are the true people of God will dare to live as your worldly neighbors do, you may expect to be taught “a more excellent way,” and to have your prayers for grace to “overcome the world,” answered “by terrible things in righteousness.” If you have been shown from the Word of God that you ought to conduct your outward affairs on Christian principles and for the glory of God, — not in accordance with “the trade spirit” maxims of the world, or for the gratification of self, or the improvement of your worldly circum-

stances, and you “turn away your ear” and refuse to listen to the voice of Heavenly Wisdom, you may expect that the God of all grace, who loves you too well to allow you to incrust your consciences with a coating of worldliness, will permit your own “wickedness to correct you, and your backslidings to reprove you,” that he may bring home to your heart the painful but salutary lesson “that it is an evil thing and bitter that you have forsaken the Lord your God.” If you backslide in heart or life from the heavenliness, devotedness, and world-renouncing spirit of “first-love,” and begin to build again the things you have professedly destroyed; if you indulge again in the unchristian conduct of calling up before your mind’s eye dreams of ambition, pleasure, distinction, honor, or worldly greatness; if you let in so much of the atmosphere of the world into your heart that your spiritual affections become chilled, your

prayers cold and formal, your Christian energies relaxed, and your life like a light in a November fog, — you may expect that you will be led back to the real path of glory through some soul-crushing ordeal and heart-rending experience, which will make the most delicate feelings of your mental nature quiver, and expose your folly in the most humiliating manner. Those Christians who are most thoroughly separated from the world, are mostly likely to be truly happy, vigorous, and useful in the service of their Lord and Master, for there is nothing more enfeebling than the love of the world. “The least deviation from the line of righteousness will take your strength away, and leave you at the mercy of the meanest foe.”

If there is one thing more than another with reference to the Christian life which the disciples of the Lord need to be warned against, it is an infringement of the evangelical precept “Owe no man any thing.”

Dear Christian reader, beware of breaking that commandment, for if you allow yourself to be beguiled by Satan into violation of this precept, you will at once weaken your spiritual nature, and procure for yourself anxieties the most distracting, and anguish of soul the most intolerable ; while you run a tremendous risk of ruining your influence for life, and wounding your Saviour in the house of his friends. On no account dare to deviate from the path of rectitude, by incurring responsibilities which you can not meet. Do not allow yourself to be entangled in worldly affairs by trusting to the considerate assistance of friends. You will get many friends to take an interest in your welfare as long as you do not require their assistance ; but you will find, in “the evil day,” after “your foot has been snared and taken,” that single-handed and alone you will be compelled to battle with your difficulties, and extricate yourself the

best way you can ; and sooner or later you will certainly be made to acknowledge that you “ have changed your glory for that which doth not profit,” and “ committed two evils,” since you “ have forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out for yourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” .

And if you have been taught from the Word, and have experienced the blessedness of living by faith and prayer for a considerable time, and yet, through returning worldliness, pride, the necessities of friends, or false humanity, have allowed your circumstances to become involved, you may expect much to humble you before man, and much more to lay you in the dust before the Lord. He is certain to bring you by a way you knew not, before he makes darkness light before you, and crooked things straight. “ Be not deceived : God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also

reap." If you sow in unbelief, you may prepare to reap in anguish. The reaping time will come to the Christian who will not live by faith with reference to temporal things. You have been sowing for many months or years a large amount of responsibility ; but the harvest comes, and darkness that may be felt settles down upon your mind. Accounts pour in upon you from every side, and, being penniless, your mind is placed upon the rack, and becomes so dreadfully confounded, burdened, and perturbed, that you can neither profitably think, read, pray, nor work ; and instead of having your face shining with the spiritual peace of former days, and radiant with the smile of heavenly enjoyment, care begins to depict in your countenance the lineaments of anxiety and incipient hopelessness. You wander lonely along the highway of the world, consciously degraded, filled with distracting thoughts respecting your own unhappy cir-

cumstances, incapable of spiritual progress ; and, like a ship becalmed in a tropic sea, you are compelled to lie motionless upon the great ocean of life, scorched by a flaming sun, and in danger of being stifled by the oppressive atmosphere in which you are forced to breathe. You attend the house of God, — you meet with devoted Christian brethren, — you continue to drag along your former profession in the accustomed ruts of duty, — you still endeavor to do something for your Lord ; but every where, and in all circumstances, your liabilities crowd in upon your mind and mar your devotions, prevent your spiritual improvement, enervate, burden, and distract you. It is reported of a late notable defaulter, of position in society, that when Christian friends told him of the progress of the Lord's work, it seemed to give him a strange and unaccountable pain and uneasiness ; he felt more pained than pleased by the information ; and when the

terrible crash and exposure came, he said, “I am glad it has happened, for *I have endured a hell in my own mind in connection with it for the last six years*; I have not a word to say in extenuation of my conduct; I am guilty of enormous sin against both God and man.” This was a dreadful condition for an outstanding professor of religion; does it not speak with a trumpet-voice of warning to all Christian disciples of every rank and age?

How gracious is our Saviour in pointing out so plainly the path of safety, faith, and glory. He would have us to be “without carefulness.” His command is, “Live not in careful suspense” (Luke xii. 29, 30), “for all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things; but rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” When burdened with care, and anxious

about your future prospects, there is no surer or speedier way of being relieved than “casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” His own blessed command is, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”* Let your con-

* “There is a way by which all excess of anxiety may be removed, and the heart be left with all its tender affection, and yet with no more solicitude than such as the blessed in heaven might feel without a diminution of their happiness. *It is to cast care on God.* That is the true and only effectual way to dispose of care. He *can* take the burden, however huge or heavy. You do not doubt that; but you ask, ‘*Will he? May I cast it on him? I—such a one as I—cast my cares—the whole multitude and burden of them—on such a being as God? I know the government of the mighty universe, and the providence which extends to the minute equally as to the magnificent, reaching low as to the fall of a sparrow and the numbering of the hairs of the head, does not distract or burden him. I know he can take a large charge and not feel it. But will he? will such greatness stoop to such littleness, such holiness come down to such vileness?*’ Yes, it will, for condescension is one characteristic of greatness; and ‘the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’ But why do I reason? Does not the Holy Ghost say by David, ‘Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee?’ and by

versation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." With such a promise there is no reason why God's people should despond in the midst of the darkest providences, or why they should, through impatience, adopt unscriptural means for promoting their worldly interests. With a Father in heaven ever ready to help us, there is no need for rushing into debt or using doubtful expedients to rectify circumstances which have, through ignorance and without sinfulness, become involved.

Many of God's children are taught, by

Peter, 'Casting all your care upon him?' and by Paul, 'Be careful for nothing?' And does not Immanuel himself say, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?' No longer ask if you may, but use your privilege. Here is your authority. The Lord says you may do it, — nay, more, — commands you to do it. It is your duty as well as your privilege. So far is it from being presumption to cast your care on God, it is a sin not to do it." — *Practical Thoughts, by William Nevins, D. D.*

bitter and dear-bought experience, that they should be separated from the world, both in principle and practice, and live as “strangers and pilgrims” here; and happy should we be if what we have now written were used by the divine Spirit to warn and instruct any of our dear readers who have not sufficiently realized the truth that the path of faith is the only path of glory. Whatever lukewarm professors may say to the contrary, “affliction and poverty are the distinctive features of the saints of God under the new dispensation; affluence and exemption from great suffering were probably those of the saints of the former economy. The character of the gospel economy is unique. It is the dispensation of *suffering*, the economy of the *cross*. The sufferings of the old dispensation were more in type and shadow and symbol. But, of the new is the great, the dark filling up of the outline of the picture. THE SON OF GOD SUFFERED, — THE

SON OF GOD DIED ! And Christianity derives all its efficacy, and the Christian dispensation all its character, and the Christian all his glory, from this single, this wondrous fact : “ Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in his name, but also to suffer for his sake.” “ Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me can not be my disciple.” Such is the nature of Christ’s religion, and such the terms of his discipleship, — suffering and self-denial. By those who are not initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom of grace, this is a truth hard to be understood. To them it is inexplicable how one, whose person is loved by God, whose sins Christ has forgiven, whose life appears holy, useful, and honored, should be the subject of divine correction, and, perhaps, in some instances, should, more than others, seem smitten of God, and afflicted. But to those who are

students of Christ, who learn at the feet of Jesus, this is not an insoluble problem.”*

“When God saves a soul he tries it. He never gives faith without trying it. The way to Zion is through the valley of Baca. You must go through the wilderness of Jordan if you are to come to the Land of Promise. Some believers are much surprised when they are called to suffer. They thought they would do some great thing for God; but all that God permits them to do is *to suffer*. Go round every one in glory, — every one has a different story, yet every one has a tale of suffering. One was persecuted in his family, by his friends and companions; another was visited by sore pains and humbling disease, — neglected by the world; another was bereaved of children; another had all these afflictions meeting in one, — deep called unto deep. Mark, all are *brought out of them*. ‘These are they

* *It is Well*. By Octavius Winslow, D. D.

which *came out* of great tribulation.' It was a dark cloud, but it passed away ; the water was deep, but they have reached the other side. Not one of them blames God for the road he led them, — 'Salvation' is their only cry. Is there any of you, dear readers, murmuring at your lot? Do not sin against God. This is the way God leads all his redeemed ones. You must have a palm as well as a white robe. No pain, no palm ; no cross, no crown ; no thorn, no throne ; no gall no glory. Learn to glory in tribulations also. 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' " *

" Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you ; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when HIS

* M'Cheyne's "*Sermons*."

GLORY shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Until his glory be revealed, we must not aspire to any glory here, but follow in his footsteps, arming ourselves likewise with the same mind. Our only safe attitude is that of coming *up from the wilderness* leaning upon our Beloved. This is not our rest, — our "rest is GLORY." (Isa. xi. 10.) This is the place of our Lord's rejection, and we could not wish that the world, which crowned our divine Master with thorns — the symbols of earth's evil condition — and nailed him to the ignominious cross as an accursed one, would crown us with wreaths of laurel, and cherish and love us as its truest friends and chosen companions. He lived, for the greater part of his sojourn here, in a lowly, obscure, and mean condition; and, after he entered on his public ministry, he could say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not

where to lay his head.” And if he who, “though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor,” lived in such circumstances, it would surely be most unbecoming in us, his professed friends and followers, to aim at being great, rich, honored, or renowned. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but *made himself of no reputation*, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, *he humbled himself*, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Oh! to be so thoroughly possessed of the lowly and self-abnegating mind of Christ, that we could enter personally and enthusiastically into the apostle’s triumphant but self-renouncing experience, when he says, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;

and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

We have no bright prospects here, but we have the brightest prospects for "the world to come." We shall be with our beloved Saviour in his kingdom, and be satisfied with the spiritual refreshment which shall be given us in his glorious presence. And even our trials here shall prepare us for higher enjoyment there: "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

These are the crowns that we shall wear
When all thy saints are crowned;
These are the palms that we shall bear
On yonder holy ground.

Far off as yet, reserved in heaven,
Above that vailing sky,
They sparkle, like the stars of even,
To Hope's far-piercing eye.

These are the robes, unsoiled and white,
Which then we shall put on,
When, foremost 'mong the sons of light,
We sit on yonder throne.

That city with the jeweled crest,
Like some new-lighted sun ;
A blaze of burning amethyst, —
Ten thousand orbs in one ; —

That is the city of the saints,
Where we so soon shall stand,
When we shall strike these desert-tents,
And quit this desert-sand.

These are the everlasting hills,
With summits bathed in day ;
The slopes down which the living rills,
Soft-lapsing, take their way.

Fair vision, how thy distant gleam
Brightens time's saddest hue !
Far fairer than the fairest dream,
And yet so strangely true !

Fair vision, how thou liftest up
The drooping brow and eye !
With the calm joy of thy sure hope
Fixing our souls on high.

Thy light makes even the darkest page
In Memory's scroll grow fair ;
Blanching the lines which tears and age
Had only deepened there.

With thee in view, the rugged slope
Becomes a level way,
Smoothed by the magic of thy hope,
And gladdened by thy ray.

With thee in view, how poor appear
The world's most winning smiles ;
Vain is the tempter's subtlest snare,
And vain hell's varied wiles.

Time's glory fades ; its beauty now
Has ceased to lure or blind ;
Each gay enchantment here below
Hast lost its power to bind.

Then welcome, toil and care and pain !
And welcome sorrow too !
All toil is rest, all grief is gain,
With such a prize in view.

Come, crown and throne ! come, robe and palm !

Burst forth, glad stream of peace !

Come, holy city of the Lamb !

Rise, Sun of Righteousness !

When shall the clouds that vail thy rays

For ever be withdrawn ?

Why dost thou tarry, day of days ?

When shall thy gladness dawn ?

Songs of Faith and Hope.



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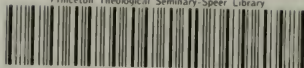
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